

Message Text

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71

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 NEA-14 IO-14 ISO-00 ORM-03 SR-02 VO-03 SCA-01

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NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 DRC-01 /138 W

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R 291556Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9245

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD BY POUCH

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, UR

SUBJ: CAMPAIGN TO DISCOURAGE SOVIET JEWISH EMIGRATION

1. SUMMARY: UKRAINIAN AND BELORUSSIAN PAPERS AND TASS WIRE SERVICE HAVE RECENTLY CONTRIBUTED TO SOVIET CAMPAIGNING TO DISCOURAGE EMIGRATION TO ISRAEL BY FOCUSING ON SEVERE PROBLEMS SOVIET JEWISH EMIGRANTS ARE ALLEGEDLY HAVING THERE. ARTICLES CLAIM THAT REQUESTS FOR EXIT PERMISSION ARE DECREASING, THAT SOME EMIGRATION VISAS HAVE BEEN RETURNED, AND THAT NUMBER OF SOVIET JEWISH EMIGRANTS IN ISRAEL NOW WANT TO RETURN TO USSR. LOCAL JEWISH OBSERVERS DENY LESSENING OF DESIRE AMONG JEWS TO EMIGRATE AND CONTINUE TO ASCRIBE DECREASE IN EMIGRATION FLOW TO SOVIET POLICIES RATHER THAN TO SECOND THOUGHTS ON PART OF SOVIET JEWS. END SUMMARY.

2. PRAVDA UKRAINY OF MAY 24 RAN QUARTER-PAGE STORY ENTITLED
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"REFINED DECEPTION" WHICH ATTACKS ZIONISTS FOR DECEIVING PROS-

PECTIVE EMIGRANTS ABOUT LIFE IN ISRAEL. QUOTING LETTERS FROM FORMER SOVIET JEWS NOW LIVING IN ISRAEL, ARTICLE CLAIMS THAT IMMIGRANTS ARE SADDLED WITH LARGE DEBT FOR TRANSPORTATION AND RESETTLEMENT COSTS AND THAT THEY HAVE NO CHOICE ABOUT PLACE OF RESIDENCE OR TYPE OF WORK. ARTICLE STATES THAT MANY ARE SETTLED IN FORMER ARAB LANDS (I.E. DANGER ZONES), AND THAT AFTER ISRAELI AUTHORITIES PLAY OUT THEIR "DIRTY POLITICAL GAME," IMMIGRANTS ARE IGNORED. PAPER NOTES THAT SOVIET JEWS WHO EXPRESS DESIRE TO EMIGRATE ARE WARNED BY SOVIET AUTHORITIES ABOUT SITUATION IN ISRAEL AND GIVEN TIME TO THINK OVER THEIR DECISION. PAPER ALSO QUOTES LETTERS FROM UKRAINIAN JEWS WHO HAVE ASKED TO HAVE VISA APPLICATIONS WITHDRAWN.

3. SOVETSKAYA BELORUSSIYA OF MAY 26 HAS SIMILAR ARTICLE WHICH DESCRIBES PLIGHT OF RECENT EMIGRANTS TO ISRAEL AND QUOTES SEVERAL WHO WANT TO RETURN TO SOVIET UNION. ARTICLE EMPHASIZES THAT TRIP TO ISRAEL IS NOT FREE AND THAT LIVING CONDITIONS THERE ARE BAD AND COSTS OF LIVING HIGH. ONE RECENT EMIGRANT TO ISRAEL QUOTED AS SAYING THAT 80 PERCENT WOULD RETURN TO USSR IF THEY COULD. ARTICLE IMPLIES THAT ISRAELI GOVERNMENT WILL NOT ALLOW EMIGRATION TO OTHER COUNTRIES UNTIL DEBTS ARE REPAID AND THAT SOVIET GOVERNMENT, HAVING WARNED EMIGRANTS, IS NOT WILLING TO ACCEPT THEM BACK.

4. TASS ARTICLE OF MAY 27 ALSO REPORTS SEVERE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AND UNEMPLOYMENT IN ISRAEL AND CLAIMS THERE HAS BEEN A DECREASE IN NEW IMMIGRANTS. TASS SAYS THAT MOSHE RIVLIN, IDENTIFIED AS DIRECTOR OF "JEWISH AGENCY FOR ISRAEL," BELIEVES OCTOBER WAR WAS SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN CURRENT IMMIGRATION SLOWDOWN AND THAT MOSHE DAYAN FEARS EMIGRATION FROM ISRAEL WILL EXCEED IMMIGRATION THIS YEAR.

5. COMMENT: ARTICLES ARE PART OF SOVIET CAMPAIGN TO DISCOURAGE EMIGRATION APPLICATIONS TO ISRAEL, BUT WE HAVE LITTLE EVIDENCE ONE WAY OR THE OTHER AS TO THEIR EFFECT. MOSCOW JEWISH ACTIVISTS CONTINUE TO DENY THAT CAMPAIGN HAS BROUGHT ABOUT GENERAL DECREASE IN DESIRE TO LEAVE. AS TO SOVIET CLAIM THAT MANY EMIGRATION VISAS NOW BEING TURNED BACK, JEWISH ACTIVISTS SEE THIS AS AUTHORITIES' ATTEMPT TO MAKE CASE THAT DECREASE IN FLOW OF EMIGRANTS STEMS FROM SECOND THOUGHTS ON PART OF SOVIET JEWS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RATHER THAN FROM THEIR OWN POLICIES. LOCAL JEWS ALLEGE THAT NEARLY ALL CASES IN WHICH VISAS HAVE BEEN TURNED BACK INVOLVE OLDER JEWS WHO ARE GIVEN PERMISSION TO LEAVE, BUT WITHOUT THEIR CHILDREN OR OTHER RELATIVES. STOESSEL

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